CCWRO Weekly New Welfare News - #2002-09

March 5, 2002

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-- CHILD SUPPORT AND TANF TIME LIMITS

The law provides that if a family received child support payment during any month that covered their CalWORKs payment, then that month is not counted as one of the 60 months.

Soon, certain parents will be time-limited. Before they are taken off aid, the county is required to determine how many months the family received child support payments that covered their CalWORKs payment.

California State Department of Social Services (CDSS) has offered the counties three options for deleting months from the 60-month time limits:

OPTION #1 - Look at the average payment for 12 months divided into child support paid to decide how many months to "un-tick";

OPTION #2 - Use actual aid payments to determine how cumulative child support would un-tick months;
OPTION #3 - Look at each month individually to determine if child support paid for that month repaid the entire cash aid payment; if so, that month would be un-ticked.

The County Welfare Directors Association (CWDA) states that "There is some question about the ability of counties to look at individual months of child support paid, especially considering payments of arrearages. This whole process could be extremely costly to administer."

--IN BRIEF

-- Previously, we reported that doctors were charging for completing welfare department forms. If you have a client who is being charged by a doctor for the completion of medical forms, the doctors can contact 1-800-541-5555. We would also encourage you to file for a fair hearing, because the county is mandated to pay for the cost of documentation or information that the county is seeking to establish eligibility.

-- The Department of Health Services (DHS) is proposing a new inter-county-transfer (ITC) process for CalWORKs-based Medi-Cal cases. Under the proposed revised ITC process, when someone receiving CalWORKs moves to another county, there will be a separate ITC process. Under this process, if the receiving county does not pick up the case, then the case will go into "38" status until the next redetermination date.

-- DHS did not have an answer on how they would handle managed care ITC cases.

-- STATE BUDGET ISSUES

-- The governor's budget denies CalWORKs recipients a COLA for 02-03 for a savings of $112 million;

-- The budget assumes that California will spend all TANF funds, except for $40 million during 2002-2003. In addition, the TANF money that was meant to meet the basic survival needs of impoverished families of California, will be transferred over to the Social Services Block Grant in the amount of $373 million. This money is used for foster care programs and other social worker type programs. Why can't $112 million of that money be towards a COLA for CalWORKs families?

-- The budget uses over $200 million in TANF money to instead pay for emergency shelters for children removed from their homes by social workers. Again, why can't $112 million of that money be used to provide a COLA to CalWORKs families?

--California counties, who are famous for imposing sanctions on 26% of unduplicated participants, while finding employment for only 8% of the participants during October, 2001 (see statistical report below), have made a claim for $1.2 billion in so-called "county performance incentives". These incentives are: (1) exits due to employment; (2) increased earnings; and (3) providing grant diversion to applicants. There is no verification that the counties actually had anything to do with these performances, but because the performers were CalWORKs recipients, not county bureaucrats, the county bureaucrats get the "incentive payments" while the CalWORKs recipients get the sanctions and the time limits. The governor's budget proposes to redirect $189 million to CalWORKs grants, services and administration. Again, we ask, why can't $112 million of that money be used for a COLA for CalWORKs families?

STATE BUDGET - Legislative Analyst Proposes CalWORKs Cutbacks

The Governor puts the budget forth every year. Within days, the Senate and Assembly introduce what are called budget bills. In late February, the Legislative Analyst office publishes a document called Budget Analysis. To get a copy of this publication go to: http://www.lao.ca.gov/

-Benefit Cut #1 - Eliminate CalWORKs Grant Payment Under $150

The AOL recommends the elimination of CalWORKs grant payments under $150. The AOL alleges that this will preserve their time on aid and will save $37 million annually. The AOL also argues that this will be offset by the same families receiving $68 additional Food Stamp benefits.

DISADVANTAGES OF THIS PROPOSAL-

-- Under this proposal the transitional child care benefits will end sooner and so will Medi-Cal transitional benefits.

-- Under this proposal, the number of families meeting the federal participation rates will go down. All of the families receiving CalWORKs benefits under $150 are meeting the federal participation rates.

--The proposal does not give CalWORKs participants the option of going off aid to preserve their time limits, rather kicks them off aid.

CCWRO POSITION- Oppose

This proposal would hurt CalWORKs families. CalWORKs recipients can go off aid anytime they wish to preserve their time limits. It will also cause California not to meet the federal time limits.

Benefit Cut #2 - Reinstate Senior Parent Deeming

This proposal would reinstate the old policy where the senior parents' income was deemed to be available to the minor parent, even if it was not actually available.

CCWRO POSITION - Oppose

This proposal would force senior parents to support the minor parents' child who is suppose to be supported through child support payments. Thus, because the government is not able to collect child support, they will deem the senior parents income available to the minor parents' child, for whom the senior parent has no liability to support. For example, Mary has a child named Barry. Barry's father is Gary. Mary does not have a father, but her mother Alice has a job and is working. Gary is not paying child support, Gary has a job, but the child support agency has not found time to collect child support from Gary. Thus Mary is forced to apply for CalWORKs. Currently, if Mary lives with Alice, she will receive welfare benefits for Barry. Under the AOL proposal Mary will be denied benefits, because Alice has income, thus, Alice's income is assumed to be available not only for the support of Mary, but also for Barry, who is Gary's responsibility, not Mary's.

This change will effect over 3,000 families in California. The savings is estimated at $11 million.

CCWRO believes that rather than going after Alice to support Barry - Government should do it's job and collect the child support from Gary, rather than forcing Alice to support Barry.

-Counties Getting Less Services/Administration Money

The Governor's budget addresses the issues of the declining amount of money for WtW services. The WtW program was designed to have all nonexempt persons participate in some WtW activity. The so-called welfare advocates agreed to this concept in 1998. CCWRO opposed this because it would enhance the number of families being sanctioned (it is now at 26%) and once the caseload goes up, more money will be needed for payments to families. Where would the money come from? This is the first year that the caseload has started to increase. This problem has barely surfaced. The caseload has not gone back to what is was in 1995.

The budget proposes that each county be given a single allocation, which will be the same amount of money they got in 2001-2002 for WtW services, drug and alcohol and juvenile facilities. With the single allocation, each county can decide to how spend this money.

-- TANF UPDATE -

George Bush's proposal for TANF reauthorization would eliminate the requirement that unpaid labor be performed at minimum wage

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STATISTICS OF THE WEEK - WtW Sanctions Versus Jobs That Resulted in Termination of CalWORKs Benefits

The alleged purpose of the CalWORKs program is to make families self-sufficient. How is this measured? Well, one way is to look at the WtW 25 reports. This report shows how many unduplicated participants were in WtW in each county, how many were sanctioned and how many participants obtained employment that resulted in termination of CalWORKs benefits.

The following is the percentage of participants who obtained jobs in October, 2001, that resulted in termination of CalWORKs benefits.

Alpine	0%	Sacramento	5%	Los Angeles	9%
Plumas	0%	Stanislaus	5%	Tuolumne	9%
Sierra	0%	Alameda	5%	San Diego	9%
Imperial	2%	Del Norte	6%	Inyo	10%
Yuba	2%	Shasta	6%	Calaveras	11%
San Benito	2%	Kern	6%	Santa Barbara	11%
Trinity	3%	Mendocino	6%	Riverside	11%
Butte	3%	Ventura	6%	Tulare	11%
San Mateo	4%	Mariposa	6%	Sonoma	12%
Santa Clara	4%	Glenn	6%	Fresno	12%
Humboldt	4%	Tehama	7%	Amador	12%
Monterey	4%	San Bernardino	7%	Contra Costa	13%
Lake	4%	Kings	7%	San Luis Obispo	13%
Sutter	4%	Lassen	7%	Yolo	15%
Colusa	4%	El Dorado	7%	Modoc	15%
Siskiyou	4%	Orange	8%	Solano	16%
San Joaquin	4%	Madera	8%	Placer	17%
Nevada	5%	Marin	8%	Mono	19%
Napa	5%	Merced	8%		
San Francisco	5%	Santa Cruz	8%		

While statewide only 8% of the participants obtained employment that resulted in termination of CalWORKs benefits, a whopping 26% were sanctioned during October, 2001. Below is a county-by-county table showing the percentage of persons sanctioned versus the percentage of persons who obtained employment that resulted in termination of cash aid.

County	Jobs	Sanctions
Alameda	5%	36%
Alpine	0%	20%
Amador	12%	5%
Butte	3%	12%
Calaveras	11%	60%
Colusa	4%	9%
Contra Costa	13%	31%
Del Norte	6%	13%
El Dorado	7%	4%
Fresno	12%	62%
Glenn	6%	47%
Humboldt	4%	23%
Imperial	2%	6%
Inyo	10%	28%
Kern	6%	23%
Kings	7%	14%
Lake	4%	25%
Lassen	7%	6%
Los Angeles	9%	31%
Madera	8%	16%
Marin	8%	35%
Mariposa	6%	34%
Mendocino	6%	37%
Merced	8%	65%
Modoc	15%	2%
Mono	19%	15%
Monterey	4%	19%
Napa	5%	20%
Nevada	5%	15%
Orange	8%	10%
Placer	17%	23%

Plumas	0%	23%	Siskiyou	4%	17%
Riverside	11%	34%	Solano	16%	13%
Sacramento	5%	5%	Sonoma	12%	31%
San Benito	2%	7%	Stanislaus	5%	15%
San Bernardino	7%	17%	Sutter	4%	27%
San Diego	9%	36%	Tehama	7%	32%
San Francisco	5%	12%	Trinity	3%	39%
San Joaquin	4%	44%	Tulare	11%	24%
San Luis Obispo	13%	30%	Tuolumne	9%	8%
San Mateo	4%	15%	Ventura	6%	19%
Santa Barbara	11%	24%	Yolo	15%	21%
Santa Clara	4%	12%	Yuba	2%	4%
Santa Cruz	8%	9%			
Shasta	6%	22%	Statewide	8%	26%
Sierra	0%	0%			

CCWRO SERVICES AVAILABLE TO LEGAL SERVICES PROGRAMS & WELFARE RECIPIENTS REFERRED TO US BY LEGAL SERVICES PROGRAMS

Types of Services Offered:

Litigation, Fair Hearing Representation, Fair Hearing Consultation, Informational Services, Research Services, In depth Consultation.

Programs Covered

CalWORKs, Welfare to Work (WtW), Food Stamps, Medi-Cal and Refugee Immigration Problems

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